

GUARDING THE TONGUE.

One of the Lessons Which Christians Find it Hard to Learn.

One of the lessons which Christians find it hard to learn is that of keeping a careful watch over their words, so that they may say nothing harmful to others or unbecoming the profession they have made. It does not generally require a very great effort to refrain from committing any of the other sins forbidden by the Decalogue, but it seems especially difficult to observe the Ninth Commandment. This is chiefly because we allow ourselves to fall into the habit of making our neighbors—not especially in the sense of those who live near us, but in the sense which includes all our friends and acquaintances—the constant topic of our talk. It adds so much to its interest if we know something about them that our interlocutors have not heard. Right-minded men and women are careful not to bear false witness, or to say slanderous things of others; but if the story has come to them second or third hand, through people whom they regard as reliable, they appear to think it is no harm to repeat it; probably taking the precaution to preface it with the remark that they cannot vouch for the truth of it, or by begging the one to whom they tell it not to repeat it, and on no account to give it as coming from them. When looked at squarely this is a very cowardly thing to do, not very much better than stabbing a person in the back, since it is very certain one would not say such things of them to their face. But it all comes from the fact of not keeping a watch over the tongue, and not realizing the harm that may come from such talk. Ordinary talk—for it cannot be dignified with the name of conversation—is rather insipid, unless seasoned with a dash of slander and a sprig of gossip, as a French cook spices his dishes with a pinch of cayenne and a bit of garlic, and many people like to be thought entertaining, no matter at what cost to others.

It is impossible to say how soon in the history of the human race the impossibility of taming or controlling the tongue was discovered. Job is regarded as one of the oldest books extant, and in it "the scourge of the tongue" is spoken of as something to be feared. Again the Psalmist, probably from a smarting recollection of his own sufferings from this cause, applies a good many uncomplimentary epithets to the tongue, such as "a sharp sword," "crafty," "deceitful," "lying," etc. In this way there are more than a hundred references to "the unruly member" scattered through the Scriptures, and the most of them are in accord with those quoted above, showing very plainly how clearly men of all times have discerned its capability of doing harm. One of the latest writers is very distinct in his assertions about the necessity laid upon every professing Christian in this respect: "If any man among you seem to be religious, and brideth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain;" and again: "If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body." And later he adds, as though he could not sufficiently warn the new converts against the danger of the tongue: "Every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind; but the tongue can no man tame." When we are listening to an eloquent address from some fine orator, or a sweet, low-toned conversation from the lips of a lovely woman, it is very hard to believe all these harsh things about the tongue; yet, unfortunately, our experience is but too apt to convince us of the truth that: "Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing" for "therewith bless we God, and therewith curse we men who are made after the similitude of God."

It is little wonder, therefore, that those who are really and earnestly trying to be pure in heart find such difficulty in keeping a ceaseless watch over this untamable little enemy that is so quick to take advantage of the least relaxing of vigilance on our part, to say something we immediately regret and wish unsaid; but unfortunately the ancient epithet "winged words" is but too true a description of them, and the moment they escape the lips they fly beyond recall; the word has been given to friend or to foe, the injury to someone who perhaps never harmed us, or to some cause which we would gladly aid.

There are some religious orders upon whom vows of perpetual silence are imposed, and to those of us who live much in the world and enjoy conversation with friends the idea of never speaking is a terrible one—far worse it seems to us than the misfor-

tune of being born deaf and dumb, for then the pleasure of audible converse would never have been known, and deaf mutes can, to a certain extent, hold communication with others by signs which are as well understood by them as are words by us. In the case of those who take the vow of silence the ears are still open to the sound of human voices, and it must take an iron will to hear and keep silent when the heart is longing to respond. In a lesser degree it needs a strong exercise of the will to keep from offending in word in one's daily familiar talk with friends; for it is just in such unguarded moments that the untamable little member is most likely to slip the leash and "speak winged words."

Putting aside the consideration of what would merit the name of evil speaking, in that it does injury to others, what an amount of perfectly inane talk passes current as conversation. The babel of sound which arises wherever an entertainment is in progress is something amazing, and the expressions that detach themselves from the roar with some distinctness are apt to be such as to lead the listener to believe it is an assembly of harmless lunatics at which he is "assisting." At the same time there is an unwritten social law that one is not expected to "talk sense" under such conditions; and those who ignore that law soon discover that they are regarded as being either pedantic or hopelessly dull, and are shunned by all those who prefer to talk nonsense. The happy medium is not easily found between these two extremes; and yet it is hard to believe that a number of sensible people lose all relish for pleasant intercourse with their acquaintances—such as they enjoy in small gatherings—the moment a few score of them enter a reception or ball room.

A very common, but very reprehensible, fault is that of talking of one's family affairs, or of the business of some association to which one belongs, to any and every one he chances to meet. We have known a person, in the course of an hour's talk, give a chance acquaintance the main facts of his whole life; or lay open for inspection every detail of the business in which he is engaged. So general is this mistake that it has become almost an axiom that if you wish to know all about a man's private character and affairs, or of some business enterprise, you must go to those who have no personal acquaintance with either, and not to intimate friends who are too reticent to talk.—Charleston Sunday News.

Summer Drownings.

In nine out of every ten of the numerous cases of drowning which sadden the summer season the fatal accident may be traced back either to ignorance of a few simple rules that should be known and observed by bathers, or else to a rash and reckless disregard of them when known. In the cases of the drowning of good swimmers, the fatal cramp is generally due to their having gone into the water too soon after eating, or when overheated, and therefore with their strength, unconsciously to themselves, below its par value. Here are the cardinal rules for swimmers: Never go into the water when overheated or soon after eating. The careful physician would probably insist upon an interval of at least two hours between meal and bath; one hour is a fair compromise between zeal and prudence, and a half hour the absolute minimum for safety. Finally, don't enter the water timidly and by degrees, but boldly with a plunge, wetting the whole body at once. If one is not able to dive in, he should wade in to knee depth, then wet the head thoroughly and plunge in boldly. These rules have been repeated often enough to be familiar to everybody, but they are continually disregarded.—New York Sun.

—Beware of an unloaded gun and a crippled mule.
—The troubles of her neighbors are apt to worry a woman.
—Occasionally a widow tries to make a hit by posing as a miss.
—When there's nothing else in a man's pocket he can pocket his pride.
—A cynical woman never shows up to an advantage at a church social.
—Most men are willing to admit that honesty is the best policy—for others.
—After reaching the age of thirty a woman has no further use for birthdays until she gets in the grandmother class.

Serious Menace to Cotton States.

A subject of vital importance to many of South Carolina's farmers is being brought to their attention in a very startling way. Austro-Hungary is taking the lead in high tariffs against exports of cotton seed oil from this country, and France, Italy and Germany are liable to follow her lead. The matter was first brought up by the New York board of trade, which submitted to the Interstate Cotton Seed Crushers' convention at New Orleans last May a memorial showing that while the export business now affords a profitable outlet for more than 40 per cent. of the cotton seed production of the United States, the four-fold increase of the duty, by Austro-Hungary, would destroy the market for more than 75,000 barrels of cotton seed oil in that country alone. The oil men of the New York produce exchange requested the Cotton Seed Crushers' Association:

"First, to memorialize the secretary of state at Washington asking that representation be made in opposition to the radical and prohibitive changes proposed to be made in the Austro-Hungarian tariffs, destructive to a business which has grown up to the advantage of both the sellers and users, under tariffs already calculated to produce as much revenue to the importing country as the business will bear.

"Second, and most important, to ask all members and friends of the cotton seed industry to impress upon their senators and congressmen that the present condition of general antagonism to American products by the European governments, threatening the destruction of markets for products of southern agriculture and manufacture amounting in the aggregate to tens of millions of dollars annually, is only to be averted or cured by reasonable modification of American tariffs.

"No attack upon the general tariff policy under which American trade and commerce has so mightily thriven, is made or intended, but it is strongly insisted that the time has come when good business and sound patriotism calls for such judicious readjustment as shall cure antagonisms and foster trade on the broad lines of the greatest good to the greatest number.

"It is pointed out that the establishment of tariffs throughout Europe destructive to the export business in cotton seed oil would throw upon the markets of the United States an enormously larger quantity of cotton seed oil than it is prepared to assimilate, and would create market conditions which would spell ruin to hundreds of oil mills throughout the South."

A special committee at the convention took necessary steps to give the matter publicity through the press, the senators and representatives in congress and the members of the association. Mr. B. F. Taylor of the Taylor Manufacturing company of this city is the secretary of the State association and is sending out a circular letter to South Carolina's representatives in congress, which reads as follows:

"As secretary and treasurer of the Carolina Independent Crushers' Association, I have been instructed to confer with the senators and representatives from South Carolina in congress and impress on them the importance of taking steps to prevent the proposed increase of duty on cotton seed oil being put in force by Austro-Hungary, Germany, France and other foreign countries. I enclose herewith resolutions adopted by the New York board of trade and the Interstate Cotton Seed Crushers' Association relating to this matter. It has been estimated that the proposed tariffs will reduce the price of cotton seed oil to about 12 cents at the mills, due to the fact that our southern States manufacture a great deal more cotton seed oil than can be consumed in the United States, and the closing of these markets on account of the proposed tariffs will leave in the hands of the mills about one million barrels of cotton seed oil, which can only be sold at a very low price. You will readily see what effect this will have on the price of cotton seed. At present the crude oil is selling at 24 cents and it is estimated that the mills in the United States purchased from the farmers during the past year 2,850,000 tons of seed, which yielded to the mills 40 gallons per ton.

"If the price of oil is reduced by reason of these tariffs to 12 cents, it will mean a reduction of \$4.80 per ton in the price, which the mills are able to pay for cotton seed. This would figure \$13,630,000 less money than the farmers received for the same quantity of cotton seed during the past season.

"We deem it extremely important that this matter be brought to the attention of the department of State and prompt measures taken to prevent the establishment of the proposed tariff, and we feel satisfied that our representatives will do everything in their power for the interest of their constituents.

"The association which I represent has mills at almost every small town in South Carolina, and by helping them, the farmers throughout the State will also be benefited. If you desire it, we can supply you with a signed petition from all of these mills, and it is our purpose to obtain these signatures at the earliest possible moment.

"We would be obliged to you, if you would co-operate with us in this matter, and give us your valuable assistance and advice as to the proper method to pursue."

There is nothing of the bugaboo in this crisis. The European demand for cotton seed oil alone, exceeds one million barrels and the trade in cakes and meal amounts to 400,000 tons annually. Germany is preparing to increase its tariffs by 25 per cent. (effective this year) and Austro-Hungary to raise the duty from 7½ cents to 30 cents per gallon after February, 1906.

A Whistler Story.

A friend of the late James McNeil Whistler saw him on the street in London, a few years ago, says Harper's Weekly, talking to a very ragged little newsboy.

As he approached to speak to the artist, he noticed that the boy was a dirty specimen of the London "New-ey" as he had ever encountered—he seemed smeared all over—literally covered with dirt.

Whistler had just asked him a question, and the boy answered:

"Yes, sir, I've been selling papers three years."

"How old are you?" inquired Whistler.

"Seven, sir."

"Oh, you must be more than that."

"No, sir, I ain't."

Then turning to his friend, who had overheard the conversation, Whistler said, "I don't think he could get that dirty in seven years, do you?"

Very Suggestive.

The mother was expecting guests for the evening, and at 8 o'clock the youngest son was told that it was bedtime. The little fellow persisted in sitting up for the occasion, pleading fear of the darkness. His mother assured him there was nothing to fear, saying he would not be alone, as the angels would be in the room to guard him. Finally the youngster reluctantly went to bed. An hour later a little figure appeared in the dining room doorway, much to the amusement of the entire company, saying:

"Mamma!"

"Well, dear?" his mother said.

"May I speak, mamma?"

"Certainly, dear. What do you want?"

"Mamma, are the angels in my room now?"

"Yes, dear."

"Are they in my bed, too?"

"Oh, yes, yes, dear," answered the mother impatiently.

"Well, then, mamma, the angels are biting me."

A Case of Second Sight.

A Scotch minister and his friend, who were coming home from a wedding, began to consider the state into which their potatoes at the wedding feast had left them.

"Sandy," said the minister, "just stop a minute here till I go ahead. Maybe I don't walk very steady, and the good wife might remark something not just right."

He walked ahead of the servant for a short distance and then asked:

"How is it? Am I walking straight?"

"Oh, ay," answered Sandy, thickly, "ye're a rocht—but who's that who's with you?"—Harper's Weekly.

—A wife is the making of a husband—but the job is seldom satisfactory to all parties concerned.

A Lack of Firmness.

A very matter of fact Scotchman called to see a neighbor, an old Irish woman, who had been ailing for some time, when the following conversation took place at the door:

"And how do you find yourself today, Bridget?"

"Sure, your honor, I'm mighty bad. This shocking weather'll be the end of me. I'll be a dead woman before long."

"Hoots, toots, woman! Ye've been saying that for the last twenty years! I'll tell ye what it is—ye want firmness o' mind. Pin' a day for yer deening and stick to it!"

Where The Bullet Struck.

Speaking of the tribulations of the cross-examiner, according to the New York Times, Henry Willimon cites this experience:

In the progress of a murder trial near Kansas City he wished to learn from a witness just where the bullet struck the victim.

"Right here in this town," replied the witness.

"Yes, I know; but where did the bullet hit him?"

"Near Sixth and Wyoming streets."

"You don't understand me. Where did the bullet enter?"

"It came in the window."

"But in what part of the body did it lodge?"

"It never hit his body."

"Well, it certainly hit him somewhere—he is dead."

"Hit him in the head," said the witness.

—Conscience is something that worries you a great deal more when something you have eaten disagrees with you than when you can kill three square meals a day.

—You could never get a woman to take any interest in a business panic if the baby was cutting a new tooth.

—One of the hardest blows to a woman is that after she marries a man she can't have him propose to her any more.

—The man who peers at other people through the wrong end of a spy-glass never makes that mistake when looking at himself.

—A man gets off so many smart sayings when nobody is around that he can't do any when he is with people for trying to think them up.

—There is hardly enough flattery in the whole world to satisfy one man who believes he has a fine figure that must be dressed in the perfection of fashion.

—Generally a man can grumble about it being too hot when he isn't grumbling about its being too cold.

—One trouble about using tact with girls is they always think it is a proposal of marriage.

—A woman considers she is leading an ideal life when she sits down to write letters or to wash her hair.

—When a woman doesn't get a letter she was expecting she feels the way a man does who has lost his last five-dollar bill on a horse race.

—A girl will never believe people will think she understands baseball unless when she goes to a game she says a lot of things that prove she doesn't.

—If women ceased to gossip their husbands would miss a lot of entertaining information about the neighbors.

—A man actually believes that he does the proposing, but, as a matter of fact, the woman in the case does it by proxy.

The oily hypocrite does not lubricate the church wheels.

—A man has to be very fond of a woman to want her to sit in his lap on a hot summer day.

—There is a lot of responsibility in making your family think what a lot of it you have in your family.

—In saving money the real secret is not to lose it through the hole at the top of your pocket.

Conviction Follows Trial

When buying loose coffee or anything your grocer happens to have in his bin, how do you know what you are getting? Some queer stories about coffee that is sold in bulk, could be told, if the people who handle it (grocers), cared to speak out.

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